

RECEIVED

MAY 28 1919

The Student-Writer

A Little Talk Every Month with Those
Interested in the Technique of Literature.

Published from the Workshop of Willard E. Hawkins,
1835 Champa Street, Denver, Colorado.

Volume IV Number 5

May, 1919

50c a Year, 3 Years \$1

FICTIONAL FORMS

(Continued from April. In the first installment, the importance to the story-writer of clear mental image of fiction in the abstract was discussed.)

Let us attempt to sketch the mental image that an experienced story-writer consciously or unconsciously follows as a pattern when he undertakes to write a piece of fiction.

First, he has in mind a conception of the essentials—the things that stand in the same relation to a piece of fiction that flour does to a cake. There may be a wide variation in the ingredients, according to the kind of cake desired; but flour in some proportion is fundamental.

The short-story or novel must have a climax. If the experienced author's concept of a short-story could be represented in the form of a picture, it doubtless would resemble the upward sweep of a wave rising toward its crest, or the ascent of a mountain. The peak of a line of story development is the climax. It represents the point of highest tension in the story—the breaking-point.



Fig. I.

Intertwined with this concept is the concept of struggle, as one of the chief ingredients in a piece of fiction. And here the mental image of a mountainous ascent again serves our purpose. To say that there cannot be a piece of fiction without struggle is practically synonymous with saying that there can be no ascent of the mountain unless he who wishes to reach the top will climb.

Entered as second-class matter April 21, 1916, at the post office at Denver, Colo.
Single copies 5 cents. Foreign subscriptions 75 cents; 3 years \$1.50.

Viewed from another angle, this mental image of a struggle resolves itself into an obstacle and the means adopted for overcoming it; and that again may be expressed as a problem and its solution. For our purpose, these are synonymous concepts.

The abstract progression of a short-story or a novel, then, could be symbolized by a struggle to the crest of a hill. (Fig. I.)

A diagram such as this would be applicable to a story in which a character strives toward an ideal, to a story in which a mystery is to be solved, or to one in which a contest of love, of business, or of other endeavor is waged. It may be said that unless the idea which comes to an author may be thus objectified there is no story.

But the above illustration represents a very general concept, and is capable of amplification. The story consisting of a single unbroken struggle to the peak or climax usually is too simple to entertain mature intellects. The need for further complexity is felt. The reader must be kept in doubt as to the outcome; variety must be introduced.

To this end, the author pictures mental depressions alternating with upward progress. The characters struggle upward against whatever obstacles may be opposing them. They push their way forward in the face of cumulative difficulties, which suddenly cease to block their way, and then for a time there is a let-up. The mental concept thus resembles the alternating ascents and descents which would be met with in an actual mountain climb. (Fig. II.)

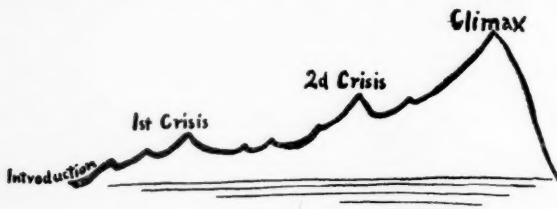


Fig. II.

In an earlier article ("Constructive Punch," April, 1918), it was suggested that three emotional crises make a good number for the short-story. There is no rule about this, of course. A strong short-story may have only one or two of such crises, while a novel or serial would have a great many. But even if there are three pronounced crises—the last and most striking being the climax—there doubtless would be many minor ridges in the development of the ordinary story.

To the novice, this picturization may still be confusing. "You say that I am to introduce three peaks in my story," the beginner exclaims. "What is a peak? How am I to know how to put the

upward slant into my writing? Does a certain kind of narration form a depression and another an upgrade of interest?"

Yes; in a general way, such is the case. Narration in which the element of struggle is very pronounced carries with it the implication of upward striving. As the contest between contending forces becomes very close, a peak is reached. When one or other of the forces triumphs—as when the climber scales the last embankment and stands upon its crest—there is a moment of tensity, perhaps physical, perhaps intellectual, perhaps emotional, perhaps spiritual. Then, before the next struggle commences, there is a period of level or descending narration, which consists of, we will say, explanations, descriptions, or comment—something in which there is no element of struggle.

For purposes of illustration, let us analyze Albert Payson Terhune's short-story, "The Derelict," in *The Red Book* for March, 1919. Following is a brief paraphrase of the story. The numbers at the side refer to the correspondingly numbered portions of Fig. III.

Judge Venable slept peacefully. Tomorrow was to mark the opening of the fall term of his court. He had gone to bed early, in preparation for it.

Across his somnolent peace brushed a ripple. He was a schoolboy again, and the academy bully was trying to force a sickeningly pungent apple down his protesting throat.

As the fumes crawled to his brain, Venable grew dizzy. Then the dream melted and he slept like the dead. But presently, dreams began to vex him again—annoying dreams, wherein unseen giants were hauling him about, lifting him from the springy softness of his bed out into the damp chill of the night—doing bothersome things to his hands and feet.

With a final effort of will he opened his eyes wide. And at what he saw, the sleep-haze vanished, leaving him alert and wide awake. A vague applelike fragrance hung in the air—an odor he recognized as chloroform.

His first motion showed him his wrists were strapped to the chair-arms, and his ankles to its stout lower rung. He was quite helpless.

Directly in front of him lounged a man. In one dirty hand he dandled a serviceable-looking revolver.

"Well?" said Judge Venable sharply.

"Well, Phil, old friend. You seem surprised at my call."

In this incident, we find ourselves on what may be termed the upgrade of our climb. There is a definite struggle, beginning when the Judge first puts up instinctive resistance to the chloroform, and growing sharper as he wakes and discovers himself confronted by a dangerous adversary. The peak of the incident is reached when the outcast coolly claims acquaintance with him. At this point, the struggle ceases for a time, while the author explains matters in what

may be termed level narration. This phase is introduced as the Judge peers into the unshaven face of his nocturnal visitor and demands:

"Who are you?"

3 "Why," answered the shabby man carelessly, "just for the present let's say I'm a disappointment."

He goes on to recall how, when they were boys together, he was first led astray by the present Judge. There is little or no sense of struggle in this reminiscence. It occupies a large share of the story, and is interrupted by some minor "peaks" which serve to sustain the interest. For example, the low-voiced story of the derelict is presently interrupted, by a call from the Judge's wife, just outside the locked door.

At the sound Jack Barret started.

4 "Dear," said the woman's voice outside, "is anything the matter? Shall I come in?"

Judge Venable's scared face had brightened. With a growl, Barret spun about and jammed the pistol-muzzle against the Judge's abdomen.

"I'm—I'm all right," babbled Venable. I'm all right, Carrie. I was—I was just dropping to sleep again."

5 "Oh, I'm sorry if I disturbed you," and light steps died away down the hall.

6 The Judge groaned aloud. Barret wiped the sweat from his own brow, pocketed the revolver and sat down again.

In a few words (this paraphrase being, however, much shorter than the original), a sharp struggle is presented—a struggle between the housebreaker, who wishes to avoid detection, and the Judge, who wishes his wife to understand the situation. It reaches its climax when the housebreaker wins, and then the story relapses again to level narration, while the derelict continues his reminder of the old score between himself and his victim.

7 Then, slowly, the curve begins to take an upward slant. The struggle recommences, as Venable senses the outcast's plan for revenge. Struggling—although futilely—he sees the derelict place a bottle of explosive beneath his chair and light the fuse.

Struggle always is the more enhanced when the odds seem hopelessly against the character involved. If the character is faced by a sheer cliff, there is more suspense than if he is confronted merely by a slight grade. In this case escape for the Judge seems impossible. Yet the peak of the incident is reached unexpectedly in the climax.

At breakfast time, failing to elicit an answer to repeated knocks, Mrs. Venable and the servants broke down the door.

8 In a chair in the center of the apartment perched the Judge so deep in a swoon of horror that the doctors worked over him nearly three hours before he revived.

9 Under the chair at the end of a trail of ash-fluff, a servant found a bottle. It was full to the mouth—with gray sand.

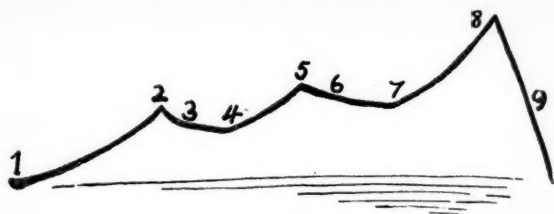


Fig. III.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Beginning of struggle or suspense. | 6. Return to level narration. |
| 2. Culmination of first struggle. | 7. Beginning of sharp final struggle. |
| 3. Lapse into retrospect. | 8. Culmination of final struggle and climax of story. |
| 4. Introduction of new suspense. | 9. Conclusion and explanation of climax. |
| 5. Culmination of second struggle. | |

This may be considered a fairly representative story-graph. First, it introduces the reader to an incident in which the intensity accumulates until it reaches a crisis; then follows a passage of retrospect in which necessary details are cleared up. This introduces a second struggle, culminating in another crisis. After this comes a contrasting passage of level narration, and then the final intense struggle. When this reaches the point of sharpest conflict we have the climax. After the climax, nothing remains but to close up the story. This last feature is appropriately represented by a sharply descending line; for the conclusion—after the struggle has reached its culmination—usually consists of a briefly worded bit of explanation or comment—practically of a negation of struggle.

The experienced story-teller does not consider himself bound to construct every story according to this exact pattern. There may be fewer than three "peaks" of interest, or there may be more. The passages of retrospect may be longer or shorter. The grades leading toward the peaks may be steep or gradual, depending upon whether a sharp, intense struggle is depicted or one that is long sustained.

THE
STUDENT-WRITER'S

HANDY MARKET LIST

Price,
25 Cents

Listing conveniently more than 300 periodical markets for manuscripts, with addresses corrected to date of publication and brief indication of the type of material used by each.

Given Free With

- | | |
|--|--------|
| 1 year's subscription (new or renewal) to The Student-Writer at... | \$.50 |
| 3 years' subscription to The Student-Writer, at..... | 1.00 |
| 1 copy of "Helps for Student-Writers," at..... | 1.00 |
| Combination of 1 year's subscription and copy of book, at..... | 1.25 |
| Combination of 3 years' subscription and copy of book, at..... | 1.75 |

Subscriptions may begin with any desired issue. A combination which includes all the Student-Writer articles published to date is the book and three years' subscription commencing with January, 1917.

But in a general way, the pattern by which he cuts his stories shows a series of rises, interrupted by level places and valleys, and culminating in a sharply defined peak—the climax toward which the action of the story has been moving.

Equipped with a mental image such as this, the story-writer should be fairly well able to criticize his own plots and the structure of his stories.

W. E. H.

(To be concluded in the next issue of *The Student-Writer*, with an application of the principle to the upbuilding of a fictional plot from the initial conception, illustrated by further diagrams.)

FOLLOWING IS A LETTER GIVING ONE WRITER'S OPINION OF THIS BOOK

I spent a whole day in the New York City Public Library looking over books on the Short Story and allied or kindred subjects. After examining over fifty books I decided I needed a copy of "Helps for Student-Writers." This was the only book that I considered would be of direct value in my work.

J. J. M.

Helps For Student-Writers

By WILLARD E. HAWKINS

Contents: Can We Afford to be Original?—Have a Standard of Style.—An Aid to Standardization.—Plot and Climax Essentials.—Naming the Characters.—Topoplays or Fiction?—The Attitude of Mind.—"Snowballing" a Plot.—The Stone Wall of Talent.—Why Strive for Unity.—The Precipice of Suspense.—Fixing the Viewpoint.—Word Lenses.—The Place of Technique.—Creative Characterization.—The Law of Rhythmic Development.—"He Said" and "She Said."—The Boiler and the Whistle.—Hackneyed Plots.—The Purpose of Fiction.

An illuminating study of literary technique for the student and critic.

POSTPAID, \$1.00.

COMBINATION OFFER: "Helps For Student-Writers" and a year's subscription, new or renewal, to *The Student-Writer*... ..\$1.25

(Including copy of *The Handy Market List*)

Address *The Student-Writer*, 1835 Champa Street, Denver, Colorado.

HAVE YOU THESE ISSUES OF THE STUDENT-WRITER? We will be glad to credit you with six months' subscription or send you a copy of "*The Handy Market List*" in exchange for each of the following back numbers: October, 1916; February, 1917; July, 1917; June, 1918, and December, 1918. Address *The Student-Writer*.

Literary Aspirants Who Take The Student-Writer's Supervision Story Writing Course Make Best Progress

Experience has convinced me that I can offer students the most satisfactory assistance by taking entire supervision over their literary work for a period of a year or more. I have no set form lessons. Each student presents a different problem, and I prefer to make a study of his or her individual needs. I have found the plan successful both with beginners and with those who have already attained a degree of success. The result with the former is to bring their work up to acceptable standards. With the latter the result is increased confidence, a more regular output, and the attainment of better markets.

Full course, \$100, payable \$10.00 monthly or \$25.00 quarterly; discount for full payment in advance. Partial courses on similar terms. Address Willard E. Hawkins, Workshop of *The Student-Writer*.

Notice to New and Old Subscribers

SUBSCRIPTIONS BEGINNING WITH BACK NUMBERS

Subscription orders for The Student-Writer will be filled at the current subscription rate of 50 cents a year, three years for \$1.00, beginning with any desired date back to January, 1916. However, the issues of October, 1916; February, 1917; July, 1917; June, 1918, and December, 1918, are exhausted. Subscription orders including these months will be extended to compensate for the missing numbers.

COMPLETE SETS NEARLY EXHAUSTED

Complete sets of The Student-Writer, with the above numbers included, are limited to a few volumes, neatly bound in book form for permanent preservation. These bound sets will soon be exhausted. As the value of a commodity is in a measure determined by its rarity, the price set upon the complete bound sets for 1917 and 1918 is \$2.00 for each year.

The 1916 articles are contained in the book, "Helps For Student-Writers," at \$1.00.

With a \$5.00 order, covering the bound, unbroken sets for the three years, 1916, 1917 and 1918, an advance one year's subscription to The Student-Writer (regular price 50 cents) is included free of charge.

These orders include a copy of "The Handy Market List" (regular price 25 cents) free of charge.

Subscribers who have complete files which they wish to preserve in book form may forward their copies to us for binding at \$1.00 a volume, postage paid. (One to three years may be included in a single binding.)

Are you in touch with your fellow writers—their activities, achievements, methods?

THE LITERARY GOSSIP MONGER,

owned and edited by Hattie Horner Louthan,
is devoted to the interests of Colorado writers, both professional
and amateur.
50 cents the year,
5 cents the copy

3600 Raleigh St.,
DENVER, COLORADO

Statement of the Ownership, Management,
Circulation, etc., Required by the
Act of Congress of Aug. 24, 1912.

of THE STUDENT-WRITER, published
monthly, at Denver, Colo., for April, 1919.

Before me, a notary in and for the state and county aforesaid, personally appeared Willard E. Hawkins, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the business manager of The Student-Writer, Denver, Colo., and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management and circulation, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor and manager are:

Publisher, Willard E. Hawkins, 1835 Champa street, Denver, Colo.; Editor, Willard E. Hawkins, 1835 Champa street, Denver, Colo.; Managing Editor, none; Manager, none.

2. That the owners are: Willard E. Hawkins, Denver, Colorado.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning

or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

WILLARD E. HAWKINS, Editor.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 7th day of April, 1919.

WM. SANDERSON.

My commission expires Oct. 13, 1919.

If Competent Criticism Helped This Writer to Literary Success it May Help You

Few magazine readers are today unacquainted with the short stories of Alexander Hull, who is regarded by many leading editors as one of the most promising of the new generation of American authors. His tales have appeared and are being featured in such magazines as *The American*, *Red Book*, *Green Book*, *Blue Book*, *Every Week*, *Argosy*, *Smart Set*, *Adventure*, *Popular*, *Bellman*, *Sunset* and several others. To an inquirer who asked him where competent literary instruction could be had Mr. Hull wrote:

"For a period of nine months or more when I was beginning my campaign of 'bucking' the magazine field, Mr. Hawkins supervised and criticised my entire fictional output. I have had other criticisms, but they simply could not be compared at all with those of Mr. Hawkins. I found him at all times clear, specific, and in the closest sympathy, not with some preconceived notions of his own, but with what I was trying to do, and with my personality and my material. In several instances he suggested the precise quirk of plot that transformed my story into salable ware. After about six months of his criticisms I began, with some consistency, to sell my stories. I am mightily enthusiastic about him, and I don't see how a writer could find a better mentor than Mr. Hawkins. I doubt if he could find one as good.—Alexander Hull."

The Rates for Student-Writer Service Are Reasonable

PROSE CRITICISM RATES.

500 words or less.....	\$1.00
500 to 1,000 words.....	1.50
1,000 to 2,000 words.....	2.00
2,000 to 5,000 words.....	2.50
5,000 to 10,000 words.....	3.00
10,000 to 15,000 words.....	4.00
15,000 to 20,000 words.....	5.00
Each 10,000 words above 20,000....	2.50

REDUCED RATES for several manuscripts sent or paid for at one time.
 2,000 to 5,000 words. 2 for \$4.50—3 for \$6—5 for \$9—10 for \$15.
 1,000 to 2,000 words. 2 for \$3.50—3 for \$5—5 for \$7.50.

Verse Revision and Criticism, 20 lines or less.....\$1.00
 Additional lines, each......05

Prose Literary Revision (a comprehensive service, designed to bring a manuscript up to a distinctive literary standard, with critical opinion and list of markets) typing included, per thousand words.....\$1.50

Literary Revision Without Typing, per thousand words\$1.00

Structural Revision and special article writing subject to estimate.

Typing Prose (carbon copy included) with careful editing, brief critical opinion, and list of markets, per thousand words.....\$1.00

Typing verse, 1 cent a line, minimum\$.25

All Fees Payable in Advance.

Return postage should accompany manuscripts sent for typing or criticism. No responsibility is assumed for manuscripts lost in transit.

The Student-Writer Workshop, 1835 Champa Street, Denver, Colo.